



# A Guide to Flood Cleanup

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## Debris/Waste: Burning

During declared emergency situations, tree and wood waste may be open burned.<sup>4</sup> Standard discretion should be used.<sup>4</sup> Burning should be done at centralized locations, but away from residential areas and under the supervision and control of the appropriate governmental officials.<sup>4</sup>

However, hazardous waste (as defined by the Environmental Protection Agency (RCRA), tires, asphalt, and asbestos should not be burned.<sup>4</sup> Asbestos should be disposed of in a landfill.<sup>4</sup> Hazardous waste should be handled and disposed of according to EPA RCRA requirements.<sup>4</sup> Tires should be reused or recycled. If disposed of in a landfill, tires must be processed.<sup>4</sup>

Because already demolished buildings often contain asbestos contamination, we recommend that they be land filled. If the asbestos material can be separated from the partially demolished buildings the remainder of the building can be burned.<sup>4</sup>

## Debris/Waste: Pesticides

Pesticides should NOT go to the landfill for disposal.<sup>4</sup> If pesticides in damaged containers are not salable or usable, they should be sent back to the manufacturer, if possible, or land applied at no more than the recommended rate.<sup>4</sup>

## Debris/Waste: Tonnage Fees

Flood debris and waste generated as a result of flood cleanup may be exempt from the tonnage fee imposed by the state<sup>4</sup> only if the county from which the waste is generated has been declared a disaster area by the governor. This exemption does not apply to normal municipal solid waste.<sup>4</sup>

A protocol should be established that landfill staff uses to determine which waste coming into the facility is attributable to the flood. In the absence of a protocol to separate tonnage attributable to the flood, an analysis of past tonnage records can be used to estimate the amount of waste disposed as a result of the flood.<sup>4</sup> The exceptional events policy is available on the Iowa Department of Natural Resources's Web site at <http://www.iowadnr.com/wmad/policy/files/stormdebris/pdf>.

## Farm Flood Debris/Waste

Debris and waste on farms related to the floods may be disposed of on the farm.<sup>4</sup> Dead farm animals, farm buildings, trees, brush, and ashes may be buried on the farm on which the debris/waste is located.<sup>4</sup> Any farm chemicals must be removed from the building before burial.<sup>4</sup> Landscape waste (trees, brush, stumps) and other similar type debris and damaged farm buildings may be burned on site, providing there is not a more restrictive local ordinance and all chemicals and asphalt shingles are removed. Burning should be done when weather conditions are favorable with respect to surrounding property.<sup>4</sup> Prior to burying or burning farm flood-related debris/waste, people should contact their nearest DNR Field Office for details on restrictions.<sup>4</sup>

## Sandbag Disposal

Cities and counties may want to consider stockpiling the sand from sandbags to sand streets, use on gravel road surfaces, take back to the sand company to be reused, or spread them on agricultural land or public ground, assuming the sand can be removed from the bags economically and effectively.<sup>4</sup> Bags still filled with sand should not be disposed of as rubble (e.g., in a ravine), but can be used for fill material under buildings, roads, parking lots, and so forth.<sup>4</sup> Bags of sand may also be used for daily cover in a landfill.<sup>4</sup> The Iowa Department of Natural Resources does not recommend that sand used in flood control be used in sand boxes, on beaches or in school yards.<sup>4</sup> However, it would be acceptable to reuse the sand for residents to spread on a backyard flower garden or use in some other limited access area.<sup>4</sup>

*Disposal for a small number of sand bags on commercial property or in the yards of residents.*

At residences, sand from sand bags can be used as fill material, such as on gravel streets and alleys, parking lots, and eroded areas in ditches and low-lying areas.<sup>1</sup>

Sand bag material creates only an insignificant public health risk relative to the existence of disease organisms when it has been spread out on the ground allowed to dry, and exposed to sunlight.<sup>1</sup>

# Information Resources

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## Iowa Department of Natural Resources:

Solid Waste Section:		515-281-4968
Field Office #1:	Manchester	563-927-2640
Field Office #2:	Mason City	641-424-4073
Field Office #3:	Spencer	712-262-4177
Field Office #4:	Atlantic	712-243-1934
Field Office #5:	Des Moines	515-725-0268
Field Office #6:	Washington	319-653-2135

## Iowa State University Extension:

**Answer Line:** 1-800-262-3804  
Questions relating to home and family  
8 a.m. to noon; 1 to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday

**Hotline:** 1-515-294-3108  
Lawn, garden, and landscape plant questions  
10 a.m. to noon; 1 to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday

**Iowa Concern:** 1-800-447-1985  
Financial questions, legal issues, family  
transitions and stress counseling. Open 24 hours.

**Agricultural and flood clean-up:**  
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/>

## American Red Cross:

**Des Moines:** 515-243-7681  
Generally have free clean up kits available at their distribution center. Food vouchers also are available for persons living in a flood area (verification of address, driver's license, or utility bill).<sup>1</sup>

## **Sources:**

1. Iowa Department of Public Health
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
3. Iowa State University Extension
4. Iowa Department of Natural Resources
5. Iowa SAFE KIDS Coalition
6. Central Iowa Critical Incident Stress Management Team
7. Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals
8. Central Iowa Inspections Health Division
9. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)